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COOKE, CONSUELO. The Essence of Still Life Folds. (1974)
Directed by: Mr. Gilbert F. Carpenter Pp. 4.

This exhibit, consisting of oil paintings and pencil drawings of drapes and paper bags, was exhibited in the Weather-spoon Gallery of the University of North Carolina at Greensboro, January 20 through February 3, 1974.

The paintings and drawings have been recorded on 35mm slides which are on file at the Walter Clinton Jackson Library of the University of North Carolina at Greensboro.

THE ESSENCE OF STILL LIFE FOLDS

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by

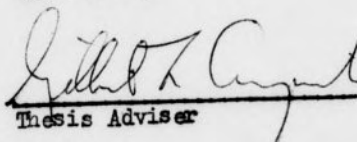
Consuelo Cooke

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A Thesis Submitted to
the Faculty of the Graduate School at
The University of North Carolina at Greensboro
in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Fine Arts

Greensboro
1974

Approved by


Thesis Adviser

APPROVAL SHEET

This thesis has been approved by the following committee
of the Faculty of the Graduate School at the University of North
Carolina at Greensboro.

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Adviser

Guthrie T. August

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Committee Members

Guthrie T. August
Andrew Martin

Joseph Crum
Warren Barker

December 7, 1973
Date of the Examination

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I wish to express my gratitude to the Professors Gilbert Carpenter, Walter Barker, Andrew Martin, and Joseph Crivy for their kind assistance in the preparation of this paper and the exhibition.

In a series of oil paintings and pencil drawings, I have intended to monumentalize folds in drapery and paper bags by increasing the size of the image to emphasize the landscape quality. Each image occupies a large part of the pictorial field. I work directly from nature in a naturalistic manner -- a matter-of-fact observation of commonplace subject matter similar to the Realist painter, Gustave Courbet. The shallow space, the restricted size of the field, the close scrutiny of subject, the intimacy and immediacy of experience relate my work to the seventeenth century still life painters.

For this group of paintings, I use different grounds and preparations. The earlier drape paintings are executed on cotton canvas primed with gesso. The first paper bag painting is done on commercially prepared linen canvas; the second is done on linen canvas that I primed with gesso. For the last study, I sized a linen canvas with rabbit-skin glue and primed it with white lead, thereby producing a smooth and less absorbent working surface.

I do not begin a painting by sketching the object on the canvas; I develop my underpainting with thin washes of copal medium that I can modify with ease. Once I have established the location of planes, I clarify them by building up the details. Oil paint seems more suitable than acrylics for this process because of its longer drying time and the ease with which tonal areas can be blended. In the paper bag studies I tone the ground so that the light

areas, when developed with whites, will function as light in the earliest stages of the painting.

In my development I have gone through different phases in an attempt to refine my technique in order to bring the object into closer focus. Drapes, which are usually just a background for a still life, have become themselves the still life. After experimenting with acrylic paintings of white sheets, I made several paintings from photographs. The photo can only capture the light of the moment, and I wished to explore the forms in different situations. Therefore, the later paintings were done directly from nature. In a series of drape paintings, using a shallow space and a magnified image, I became too involved with local color and the decorative quality of the sinuous line, sublimating the forms. To become more involved with forms, I changed my primary subject matter to paper bags and began to work monochromatically. The paper bags resembled landscapes, rock quarries, and mountains because of their defined planes, abrupt transitions, and surfaces. Since there are no objects to use in establishing scale, these bags seem much larger than they really are.

My drawings are executed with a mechanical pencil and a range of leads on a small hard-surfaced board, so that each stroke will function as a crisp line. By holding a magnifying glass over the drawings as I work, I gradually build up forms with pencil strokes perpendicular to the edge of the fold. The image is only slightly

over life-size, and the still lifes are placed in a shallow space on a tabletop; therefore, the image is not intended to seem as monumental as in the paintings, because of the greater delicacy of the pencil medium and the more diminutive size of the ground. There are still no objects by which one can establish scale, so the image is indeterminate in size. The pencil images are intended to have a more reticent quality than the paintings, and I have attempted to achieve a purity in the image and a clarification of spatial relationships. The elimination of color simplified my technical problems. It allowed me to concentrate on the development and the build-up of forms in an attempt to reduce the linear reading of forms that results from a concentration on the edges.

In conclusion, I have attempted to create an image of an object which resembles the object so closely that it seems to have become the object itself.

CATALOG

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1. "Folded Purple Polyester Shorts" January 1973
Pencil on illustration board $7 \frac{3}{8} \times 9 \frac{15}{16}$ "
2. "Folded Towel Piece" January 13 - January 26, 1973
Pencil on illustration board $7 \frac{3}{8} \times 10$ "
3. "Large Folded Corduroy Piece" January 26 - February 27, 1973
Pencil on illustration board $7 \frac{1}{2} \times 10 \frac{1}{16}$ "
4. "Folded Corduroy Piece" January 26 - May 4, 1973
Pencil on illustration board $6 \frac{13}{16} \times 9 \frac{1}{4}$ "
5. "Folded Polyester Piece" January 26 - May 4, 1973
Pencil on illustration board $7 \frac{7}{16} \times 9 \frac{13}{16}$ "
6. "Folded Organza Piece" January 26 - May 4, 1973
Pencil on illustration board $6 \frac{3}{8} \times 9 \frac{3}{4}$ "
7. "Folded Felt Piece" February 26 - November 5, 1973
Pencil on illustration board $6 \frac{3}{8} \times 9 \frac{3}{8}$ "
8. "Folded Canvas Piece" April - August, 1973
Pencil on illustration board $7 \frac{3}{8} \times 10 \frac{1}{16}$ "
9. "Canvas Drape" April - August, 1973
Oil on cotton canvas 16×20 "
10. "Crinkled Paper Bag" August - December, 1973
Oil on linen canvas 20×24 "